

Proposal to Improve Student Communication at Brevard College

IMC Team

Updated 3/26/19

Approved by ELT 04/09/19

Current Situation

According to data collected by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Success (see supplemental document) communication is an issue that appears to be negatively affecting retention at Brevard College. Data collection indicates, "Emails are frequent and often get lost in the shuffle". Overuse of email may lead to cognitive overload and should be addressed to ensure important information is disseminated effectively.

Here is a snapshot of the emails sent to students at Brevard College over the course of one month.

- Between Feb 4th and March 1st 102 emails were sent to student-list@brevard.edu
- This time period equates to 20 school days (m-f)
 - **Post office** sent 4 (no postal emergencies were noted)
 - **Wellness Center** sent 9 (none were related to any health emergencies or outbreaks)
 - **Security** sent 3 (none of these were related to a security issue, one was about hot water, one was about a drone flying around for pics, and the other was about parking)
 - **Faculty** sent 16 (mostly event reminders)
 - Most of the others were from various folks in the campus life/career services world and were often event announcements and updates.
 - Amounts to 5.1 emails per school day sent to student-list@brevard.edu
- Students also receive additional emails from their course instructors, advisors, and others.

Currently ALL staff and faculty are given access to send emails to student-list@brevard.edu. It should be noted that there is no mandate in the current acceptable use policy stating that all faculty and staff should have access to send to that list. Below are the email and mass email sections of the acceptable use policy. It should be noted that current policy does place some general guidelines on the types of mass email that are allowed (see highlighted section).

E. E-mail

Brevard College provides an email accounts and is an official means of communication for the College. In recognition that certain communications may be time-critical, each member of the Brevard College community is expected to check their official email address on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with college and course communications. E-mail (electronic mail) is designed for direct communications between specific individuals or specified groups. It may also be used for communication to a wider general audience when appropriate. The Campus Network and E-Mail system is not to be used for "junk mail" (unsolicited mail that is of little interest or use to the majority of users receiving it) personal announcements, advertisements or other promotions. E-mail is considered a formal written record that carries the same legal weight as a formal

memorandum. Users of e-mail should remember that e-mail messages become the possession of the receiver and can be easily duplicated and redistributed by recipients. College policy prohibits certain types of e-mail, including mail that may be perceived as harassment, political campaigning or commercial solicitation. Chain mail is also prohibited.

Use of a Brevard College email address is to be limited to college business only. Faculty, staff and students are assigned a quota of space for storage of their e-mail. The e-mail server will automatically notify you when you are getting close to your storage quota. When an account reaches or surpasses the quota limit, the user account will not be able to send or receive e-mail until stored messages are deleted.

F. Mass e-mail

Mass E-mail at Brevard College is defined as an E-mail message sent to all members of one or more of the three principal groups on campus: BC Faculty, BC Staff, or BC Students. In recent years, both the number of messages and the size of individual E-mail messages sent to large groups on campus have grown tremendously, which collectively have the effect of putting undue stress on our E-mail server and quickly filling users' E-mail inboxes, requiring users to spend more time removing messages to be able to send new messages. The large number of mass E-mails sent also makes it more difficult for users to discern messages of genuine necessity or urgency to the entire campus from those of lesser or more marginal interest to smaller groups of faculty, staff, or students.

In order to cut down on both the size and frequency of mass E-mail, all users on campus should take note of the following policies concerning mass E-mail:

- Mass E-mail sent by a faculty or staff member to all faculty (BC Faculty) and/or staff (BC Staff) as part of the business or academic mission of the College does not require prior approval, but it must adhere to all other standards pertaining to mass E-mail.
- Mass E-mail is generally limited to one of the following types of information and must be approved and sent by an office or person responsible for that kind of information. (Examples of such offices or persons are listed in parentheses):
 - Announcements of emergency, crisis, weather, or campus security situations (the President's office, Campus Security office)
 - Announcements of changes or disruptions of service (IT Dept., Maintenance Dept.)
 - Announcements of significance to the campus (President's Office, Dean of Student Life, Dean of Faculty and VP for Academic Affairs, VP of Institutional Development, VP of Admissions and Marketing, Library Director, Director of Marketing and Communication, Division Chairs, Director of Athletics, Payroll)
 - Announcements of official policies, changes in policies, or academic deadlines (Registrar's office, Dean of Faculty and VP for Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Life, Library Director, President's Office)
 - Any other critical and/or time-sensitive situation affecting the campus as a whole (the 4 VPs, President's Office, Dean of Student Life)
- All Mass E-mail must be sent as a plain text message.
- As a rule, all mass E-mail should not include attachments. When it is necessary to include attachments, the total size of all attachments must be less than 50kb.

Attempts to circumvent these limitations, whether from inside or outside, may be considered a violation of the college's Acceptable Use Policy.

Recommendations Moving Forward

It is recommended that action is take to ensure the acceptable use policy is adhered to by clearly listing all of the specific positions that are allowed to send mass email to the student-list@brevard.edu address. It is also recommended that technology based restrictions are implemented by the IT department to ensure only those approved positions are able to send to student-list@brevard.edu. Recommendations for positions that should be approved to send email to student-list@brevard.edu are below:

ELT

- All VPs
- Assistants to VPs
- President
- Assistants to the President

Academics

- Division Chairs
- Division Assistants
- Library Director
- Registrar
- Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Success
- The Clarion (clarion@brevard.edu)

Fine Arts

- Director of Communications

Athletics

- SID
- Asst. SID
- AD
- AAD

Campus Life

- Associate Dean of Students (Michael)
- Coordinator for Counseling Services (Dee)
- College Minister
- Director of Security (Stan)

IT/Finance/Admissions/Financial Aid/Maintenance

- Director of IT
- Director of Finance
- Director of Financial Aid
- Director of Admissions
- Director of Maintenance

In addition to restricting the number of individuals who are able to send emails to student-list@brevard.edu it is recommended all event information that is sent to the student list be consolidated and managed by the communications office. It is recommended one email per week be sent from the office of communications that lists all of the events coming up in the week ahead. No other event reminders or other event announcement emails are recommended.

All other information can be disseminated to students using one of the following mediums: MyBrevard, Digital Signage (TV screens around campus), and the BC

Radar App. Some of the information that should be relegated to these mediums includes departmental hours, menus, office hours, policies and procedures, etc.

In the event of a campus wide emergency, initial alerts should be made by those authorized to use the blackboard emergency notification system. Further notice may be made using digital signage, alerts on MyBrevard, and the BC Radar app if applicable (see disaster response plan for more). It is recommended all additional communication, including any mass emails, pertaining to campus wide emergencies will be directed through the Public Information (communications) office to ensure consistency and accuracy of the information disseminated.